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J. J. Audubon

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THE NIGHTHAWK.

(*Chordeiles virginianus* (GMEL.))

THE AUDUBON MAGAZINE.

VOL. I. NOVEMBER, 1887. No. 10.

THE CHARACTER OF JOHN JAMES AUDUBON.

II.

AS has been said before, Audubon's was no well-rounded, complete character; loving he was, but wanting in the capacity for self-sacrifice; generous, but without any controlling sense of duty. Let us deal gently with this last-named shortcoming, for had he been animated by a high sense of duty to his gentle wife he could not have allowed her to eat the bread of dependence and to struggle unaided in the battle of life for well nigh twenty years of her married life; he would have sacrificed his predilections, bent his neck to the common yoke in some more or less distasteful business pursuit, and both he and she would have missed the crowning triumph of their lives.

And indeed Audubon would have been quite incapable of this desertion on his own motion. He needed his wife's unqualified approval, and her expression of unbounded faith in the value of his labors to justify his desertion to himself, and we must appreciate the measure of self-denial this required of her before we can begin to realize the ideal nobleness of the woman who reverently sacrificed the domestic hearth and devoted her life, her energies, her talents, to affording her husband the opportunity to complete his labors, and to aid him with the material means necessary to secure the world's recognition of them.

Down to the loss of the remnant of his fortune through that "infernal saw mill," as he styled it, he had been roaming about the woods and observing and painting his loved birds, but not as a means to a practical end for the benefit of his wife and family. As he told Wilson at Louisville and reasserted in his diary, he had at that time no thought of publishing. He was simply indulging tastes for which he had a craving amounting to a passion. He knew, too, that his indulgence in this passion led him to be regarded as a vagabond; and while this estimate stung him to the quick, and although he felt in the secret recesses of his heart that his pursuit was lofty in comparison with the all-absorbing race for wealth, he must nevertheless have suffered keenly from a mistrust of his own judgment.

But when Wilson called on him for a subscription to his work, which he was then preparing to publish with material inferior in quantity and quality to that which Audubon had already collected, the latter built on the possibilities of turning his own collections to account, and on a vastly more magnificent scale; but even then he laid out no plan of operation to secure means to the desired end. On the contrary, he just went on dreaming until, his last cent sunk in ill-judged enterprises, he was thrown entirely on his own resources for the support of his wife and family. This

was the turning point of Audubon's life. Up to this moment all his labors as a naturalist had been simply the enjoyment of his leisure, and it would naturally have been supposed that in the position in which he was then placed he would have devoted himself entirely to retrieving his position and providing for his family. He made the effort, and being a man of talent and culture, soon secured a position in which he was enabled to maintain his family in comfort, but ere long he drifted away to the woods again, and this time with a definite purpose. The pastime of his leisure was to become the business of his life. He had now before him the definite task of adding to his collections and completing his observation of the birds of America, a congenial task which should bring him name and fame, in addition to the more material reward of labor.

But while we do justice to the enthusiasm with which he prosecuted the work, to the dauntless spirit with which he confronted all obstacles, to the sanguine temperament which made him cheerful amid reverses, and to the tireless industry with which he diverted his intervals of leisure to procuring means for carrying on his work, we should never lose sight of the fact that it was his wife's faith in his work and genius which gave substance to his dreams, her prudence which foresaw and prepared for the final difficulties, her self-denial which devoted him to the work, and furnished him with the means of success, won by her own rare energy and talents.

That Audubon thoroughly appreciated the devotion of his wife, and felt encouraged by her sympathy with his pursuits and her faith in his ultimate success, goes without saying; but when the day of triumph came at last, it is very doubtful if he realized that his success was in any way due to his wife's efforts. He had such a contempt for money, such a want of appreciation of the self-denial necessary to its accumulation, and such an imperfect realization of its importance, that he could form no just estimate of the value of his wife's coöperation. His work had been submitted to the best judges of Europe, had been appreciated and won distinction for him. That work was his own; the publication of his book, the recognition and reward of his genius. "His sweet Lucy had believed in him from the first, and now he had justified her faith in him by his success," and could lay his well-earned triumphs at her feet. But Audubon's was one of those rare natures which success only tended to expand and elevate. The craving for appreciation, the keen sensitiveness to the opinions of others which characterized the period of his struggles, was succeeded by the calm consciousness that the labors of his life were dignified and worthy, and recognized by all the world as such. The whole character of the man expanded in the sunshine of success, he ceased to be concerned with what others thought of him, and was better prepared to appreciate the character of others.

And now gradually there appears to have dawned on him a correct estimate of the character of his devoted wife, and of the important part she had played in the achievement of his success. He had never meanly sought to disparage, he had simply never realized it; he was the more blinded by the fact that she had been foremost in rendering homage to his genius; but when his eyes were at length directed to the truth, when he realized that he owed his success to the self-denying devotion of the wife whose proffered incense he had been receiving as his due, the self-consciousness of the man vanished, he was lifted out of himself and constrained to bow down and reverence a character whose unselfish greatness dawned on him as a new revelation. Audubon was humbled by the discovery, but elevated also; the emotion of reverence pointed to an ideal standard of excellence

outside of himself, and went far to form and strengthen his character. He needed this calm reliance on his wife's strength, for his own nature was essentially self-indulgent, and all self-indulgent natures are weak.

And yet how necessary was such a man as Audubon to the development of his wife's character. The sunshine of later years lent softness to it, but it was in the hard battling with the storms of adversity that it gathered strength, in the long years of self-denial for duty's sake that it expanded to its full proportions. He laid his genius on the altar, she her lofty character and wifely devotion; and as they breasted the fierce storms of adversity together their union became so complete that the individuality of each was merged in the other, forming that ideally perfect union so rarely witnessed.

Men went to see Audubon and render homage to his genius, and came away impressed with the gentle and guileless sweetness of his wife and the tender reverence he displayed to her. For the greater number, Audubon filled the foreground of the picture so completely, that the devotion to his wife in later years is credited to the noble simplicity of his character, without a suspicion that this reverence was her just due, but here and there some one with keener insight than the others has given vent to the impression "that Audubon owed more to his wife than the world knew, or ever would know."

THE NIGHTHAWK.

THIS bird seems to be singularly unfortunate in its common names, one of them being an absurd survival of ancient superstition, and others attributing to it characteristics which it does not possess. No doubt it was called Goatsucker by the early settlers of America because of its resemblance to the European nightjar, which from time immemorial has been supposed by the ignorant and vulgar to rob the goats of their milk at night. Its name of Bullbat alludes to the groaning sound which it makes at certain seasons of the year, and which bears some resemblance to the low bellow of a bull, and to its common habit of flying in the dusk of the evening. *Crapaud volant*, or Flying Toad, which Audubon gives as its name among the Louisiana Creoles, perhaps refers to the same sound, which is not unlike the low-pitched tones of a toad or frog. Nighthawk, although perhaps less objectionable than any of the titles given to the bird, is still a misnomer, for it is not a hawk, nor is it exclusively a night bird.

Conspicuous enough toward evening, and sometimes during the whole day, especially when the weather is gloomy and the sky is overcast, the Nighthawk is yet a bird about which most people know very little. Except during the migration in autumn, when in favorable weather it may often be seen on the wing at all hours of the day, it is most active during the twilight hours. It darts about through the upper air with a firm, light, yet sustained flight, often uttering its shrill squeak, and sometimes descending like a falling bolt from a great height toward the earth, and then turning suddenly upward, produces the loud booming sound already alluded to, which, if heard near at hand, is very startling. This sound is regarded as characteristic of the mating season, yet we have heard it as late as the first days of August. There is a difference of opinion among ornithologists as to the

way in which this sound is produced, some believing it to be vocal and others considering that it is caused by the wings when the bird suddenly checks itself in its downward flight. The Goatsucker of Europe is said to make a somewhat similar noise when perched, which would seem to confirm the belief that the sound is made by the voice.

The Nighthawk is a bird of wide range, being found in summer as far north as the shores of Hudson's Bay, and in winter extending its migrations south to Brazil. The typical form, or a closely allied variety, is found from the Atlantic coast to the Pacific.

This bird does not pass the winter in the United States, but coming from the south enters Louisiana about the first of April. A month later it has reached the Middle States, but according to Audubon is not seen in Maine before June. As soon as they arrive, they make their presence known by their vociferous cries and by their active and beautiful flight through the air. Audubon's description of its motions at this season is so graphic as to be well worth quoting. He says: "The motions of its wings, which are peculiarly graceful, and the playfulness which it evinces renders its flight quite interesting. The bird appears to glide through the air with all imaginable ease, assisting its ascent, or supporting itself on high, by irregular hurried flappings performed at intervals, as if it had unexpectedly fallen in with its prey, pursued, and seized it. Its onward motion is then continued. It moves in this manner, either upward in circles, emitting a loud, sharp squeak at the beginning of each sudden start it takes, or straight downward, then to the right or left, whether high or low, as it presses onward, now skimming closely over the rivers, lakes or shores of the Atlantic, and again wending its way over the forests or mountain tops. During the love season its mode of flight is particularly interesting; the male may be said to court his mate entirely on the wing, strutting as it were through the air, and performing a variety of evolutions with the greatest ease and elegance, insomuch that no bird with which I am acquainted can rival it in this respect.

"It frequently raises itself a hundred yards, sometimes much more, and apparently in the same careless manner already mentioned, its squeaking notes becoming louder and more frequent the higher it ascends; when, checking its course, it at once glides obliquely downward with wings and tail half closed, and with such rapidity that a person might easily conceive it to be about to dash itself against the ground. But when close to the earth, often at no greater distance than a few feet, it instantaneously stretches out its wings, so as to be nearly directed downward at right angles with the body, expands its tail, and thus suddenly checks its downward career. It then brushes as it were, through the air, with inconceivable force, in a semicircular line of a few yards in extent. This is the moment when the singular noise produced by this bird is heard, for the next instant it rises in an almost perpendicular course, and soon begins anew this curious mode of courtship."

It is often the case that birds whose powers of flight are very highly developed are scarcely able to walk at all, and conversely, some birds which are swift runners or expert swimmers are almost without the power of flight. The Nighthawk belongs in the first of these categories. Its feet are ridiculously small and weak for the size of the bird, and are besides placed very far back, so that it can scarcely walk at all. When at rest, it seems to rest on its breast, and does not stand on its feet. It is often seen perched on the limb of a tree or on a fence rail, not across the support, as is the case with most birds, but lengthwise of it.

The Nighthawk builds no nest, but deposits its two oval gray-freckled eggs on the bare ground. It seems careless in its choice of a position, and we have found

them on a naked rock, on the grass in a pasture land, on a dry sandbar in a river, and on a high rocky table land among the sage brush. Not infrequently they deposit their eggs on the flat roofs of city houses. The eggs are so nearly the color of the ground on which they rest that they are not likely to be discovered except by accident or by the actions of the parent bird as you pass near her. When the nest is discovered, the mother tries to lure you away from it by feigning to be wounded, and flutters and tumbles about on the ground at your feet, trembling and panting, with open mouth, keeping just out of reach, until she has led you some little distance from her eggs or young. Then her flights become a little longer, and at length she soars away to be seen no more until you have left the neighborhood. The young of the Nighthawk, like the eggs, harmonize so well in color with the ground, that it is not easy to discover them, even though your eyes may have rested almost on the exact spot from which the mother rose.

The food of this species consists wholly of insects. They devour great numbers of beetles, moths, grasshoppers, crickets and mosquitoes, and are thus extremely useful birds. Notwithstanding this well-known fact, great numbers of them are shot during the autumn when they are migrating, principally in mere wantonness, their swift flight making them an attractive target for the gunner.

It is a very common, though erroneous, belief that the Nighthawk and the whip-poorwill are the same bird. They belong to the same family and are near relatives, but are quite distinct.

The Nighthawk is 9½ inches in length and 23½ inches across its outspread wings. The bill is very short and feeble, measuring only ¼ inch along its ridge, but its mouth is enormous, opening to behind the eyes. As might be expected in a bird which is to a certain extent nocturnal in its habits, its eyes are very large. The wings are long, extending when closed beyond the forked tail. The claw of the middle toe is notched, or comb-like. The ground color of the plumage is brownish black, barred and sprinkled with white and cream color. A conspicuous white bar extends across the five outer primary quills. The tail feathers are barred with brownish gray, and the four outer ones on each side are marked with a white spot toward the tip. A broad triangular white band marks the throat and sides of head. The lower tail coverts are white, sparsely barred with black. The female is somewhat smaller than the male, has the wing spot smaller, the white throat band much obscured by brownish and blackish markings, and lacks the white spots on the tail feathers.

UNDER THE LIGHTHOUSE.

BENEATH the tall white lighthouse strayed the children
In the May morning sweet;
About the steep and rough gray rocks they wandered
With hesitating feet;
For scattered far and wide the birds were lying
Quiet and cold and dead;
That met while they were swiftly winging *south*ward
The fierce light overhead.

CELIA THAXTER.

HINTS TO AUDUBON WORKERS.*

FIFTY COMMON BIRDS AND HOW TO KNOW THEM.

VI.

COWBIRD.

THE cowbird is one of the smaller blackbirds. The male has an iridescent body and purplish-brown head and neck. The female has no brilliant coloring, and is decidedly dingy in appearance.

About the size of the kingbird, the cowbird imposes upon its brothers in the same systematic manner. It employs subtle measures, however, and the result of its work is much worse than that of the kingbird's. Coues says of its habits: "Like the European cuckoo, it builds no nest, laying its eggs by stealth in the nests of various other birds, especially warblers, vireos and sparrows; and it appears to constitute, furthermore, a remarkable exception to the rule of conjugal affection and fidelity among birds. A wonderful provision for the perpetuation of the species is seen in its instinctive selection of smaller birds as the foster-parents of its offspring; for the larger egg receives the greater share of warmth during incubation, and the lustier. young cowbird asserts its precedence in the nest; while the foster-birds, however reluctant to incubate the strange egg (their devices to avoid the duty are sometimes astonishing), become assiduous in their care of the foundling, even to the neglect of their own young. The cowbird's egg is said to hatch sooner than that of most birds; this would obviously confer additional advantage."

In describing the song of the cowbird, Mr. Bicknell says: "It has an indefinite beginning, which is continued into a high attenuated note, ending with a sound curiously like that of bubbling water. This irresistibly suggests a bubble-like bursting forth of sound after a long audible inhalation. * * * The singular bodily action which accompanies the vocal expression of the cowbird conveys the suggestion that the air sacs of the body are brought into play in the production of song. The ducking of its head, the spasmodic motion of its tail, the half-opening of its wings, the swelling of its body, which collapses with the culminating notes; all this, seems to point to the utilization of the air sacs—to their inflation and the muscular expulsion of the contained air—in the execution of its singular vocal performance."

INDIGO BIRD.

In his extremely interesting paper in the July number of the AUDUBON MAGAZINE, Mr. Ridgway shows what a mistake people have made in depreciating our American songsters. With equal justice an article might be written calling attention to the brilliant plumage of many of our Northern birds. The oriole, bluebird, goldfinch, purple finch, barn swallow, scarlet tanager, red-headed woodpecker, yellow-bellied vireo and numbers of our warblers would excite wondering delight if they should bear South American or European labels. Indeed, we need to establish a fashion of appreciating our national gallery of beauties among birds as well as among roadside flowers.

One of our most brilliant every-day beauties, and one whose song also merits close attention, is the indigo bird. Only in a poor light is he as dull as our common indigo. In the sunlight his coat is the most intense, exquisite blue, the shade of which varies as he moves, and is described by Thoreau as "glowing indigo;"

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by De Kay as "sky blue, showing in some lights a greenish tint;" by Baird in his "Birds of North America," as "bright ultramarine blue;" by Ridgway in the "History of North American Birds," as "blue, tinged with ultramarine on the head, throat, and middle of breast; elsewhere with verdigris-green;" and by Coues as "indigo blue, intense and constant on the head, glancing greenish with different lights on other parts." To this Coues adds more details, with a description of the female. He says: "Wings and tail blackish, glossed with greenish-blue; feathers around base of bill, black; bill dark above, rather paler below. * * * Female above plain warm brown, below whity-brown." * * * She has a very pretty tinge of blue on her shoulders and tail feathers, but if the light is not right to bring this out, the peculiarly warm brown, which is almost burnt sienna, is enough to distinguish her from the ordinary brown birds whom she approaches in size and build. Her habit of jerking her tail from side to side is also characteristic.

The indigo bird is one of our most energetic and untiring songsters. He is usually seen on the top of a bush or a small tree not more than twenty or thirty feet from the ground; sometimes in the edge of the woods, or in a clump of bushes beside the road, but oftener, Nuttall says, in the garden, where his breezy, sunny song shows that he is making the most of all the light and air that are to be had. He revels in sunshine, and like the scarlet tanager and red-eyed vireo, sings as loudly through the noonday heat as in the cooler hours. His vivacious roundelay has been variously syllabified, but the rhythm and tone may be suggested by *che-ree' che-ree' che-ree' che-ree' che-rah' rah-rup'*. The last half varies greatly, sometimes being *che-rah' rah-ah-rup*, or *che-rah' che-rip' cherup'*. Very often the song ends with an indescribable, rapid flourish of confused notes. Nuttall says that during the nesting, the father bird shortens his song, but this is not always so, as I have heard the full song from the beginning till the end of the season.

This June a pair of indigo birds built in the edge of the woods only a few rods from the house, but I think they never ceased to regret their temerity. The nest was a pretty little bunch of dry leaves and grass, its deep, narrow cavity lined with hair. It was wedged into the fork of a tiny beech, only six inches from the ground, and not more than three feet from the carriage drive. The mother would sit perfectly quiet when wagons passed, but as soon as she found that I had discovered her nest she would fly off in distress whenever I happened to be walking by. To verify the apparently conflicting statements concerning the color of the eggs, and satisfy myself that in some lights the pure white changed to a beautiful greenish-blue, I went several times before they were hatched; and when the birds appeared, went still oftener to watch their growth. But unlike the vireos and sparrows, the mother never got used to me, and to the last suspected me of—I don't know what murderous intentions—darting off into the low bushes with her metallic *cheep, cheep*, as soon as she caught sight of me, and almost refusing to feed her babies till I had gone back to the house. Her husband, though of rather a suspicious temperament, could not share her alarm; he chirped and jerked his tail about, but his anxiety had a perfunctory air.

Earlier in the season I saw a very marked instance of this difference in temperament. I was walking through the edge of a clearing when I started up a mother indigo bird, apparently looking for a good site for her nest. She was much excited, and flew about hither and thither, crying *cheep, cheep*, and twitching her tail nervously. She made so much noise that her husband heard her, and came flying home to find out what was the matter. He did not think either my dogs or I looked belligerent, but he followed

her about from limb to limb to be on hand in case anything should happen. It was very evident that he did not sympathize with her fears, as he neither cried out nor jerked his tail; and after he had chased her here and there, up and down, back and forth, for some time, he turned toward her on the branch and looked at her as much as to say, "Oh! you tiresome creature; why will you be so absurd? Don't you see they're not going to hurt you?"

His contempt had no effect, however, and—he opened his mouth at her! This threat of conjugal authority subdued her, and at last she meekly flew off into the woods with him.

LEAST FLYCATCHER.

If you have been in the country, or even in some of our smaller towns during the spring and summer, you have probably noticed the reiteration of a peculiarly abrupt call of two notes—a *che-beck' che-beck'* coming from the apple trees and undergrowth. If you have followed it up you have discovered a small gray bird, in coat and habit a miniature of the phœbe and wood pewee, jerking his tail and whole body with his emphatic call.

This small bird seems to be a piquant satire on the days of tournament and joust, when knights started out with leveled lances to give battle to every one they met. He is a fearless little warrior, snapping his bill ominously as he charges, full tilt, at his enemy.

Last summer I heard this snapping, together with loud calls of *che-beck'*, coming from a thicket, and went to see what was going on. There, in a low willow, I found a family of young, sunning themselves while their mother brought them their dinner. It seemed a very peaceable scene, but a picket fence ran along just back of the willow, and I soon discovered that this was the tilt yard. Whenever a song sparrow or pewee happened to light there, and stretch its wings for a sun bath, the fierce little mother would suddenly appear, dart at the inoffensive bird, and fairly throw him off the fence with the abruptness of her onset.

After unseating her enemy she would fly off as fast as she had come, career about in the air till she had snapped up a fly or miller, dart back, thrust it into one of the open mouths with a jab that threatened to decapitate the little one, and seemed to mean, "There, take it quick if you've got to have it," and with a flirt of the tail and wings, before I had time for a second look, would be off in hot pursuit of another insect.

I wanted to see if she would be afraid of me, and so crept up by the fence, almost under the little birds. Two of them sat there side by side, in the most affectionate manner, nestling down on the branch and showing their soft white feathers to the best advantage. They did not mind me, and closed their eyes as if the warm sunlight made them sleepy. All of a sudden their mother flew up to one of them with a fly, but the sight of me startled her so that instead of giving it to him she sprang up on top of his head and was off like a flash, almost tumbling him off from the branch, and leaving him looking very much scared and bewildered. As soon as her nerves recovered from the shock, she came back again and went on with her work as if I had not been there.

The father seemed to be as restless and pugnacious as the mother, and, if appearances were to be trusted, was quarreling with his neighbors in a tree near by, while his wife guarded the picket and fed her young.

FLORENCE A. MERRIAM.

BYRAM AND GHOPAL

VII.

AS they neared the town, Byram several times pricked up his ears and listened. Finally he asked Ghopal if he did not hear any sounds of distant revelry. Ghopal had heard nothing, but ere long the sound of tom-toms fell distinctly on his ear.

"Some wedding, perhaps," said Ghopal.

"I think not," said Byram. "Do you not see something like a cloud between us and the town?"

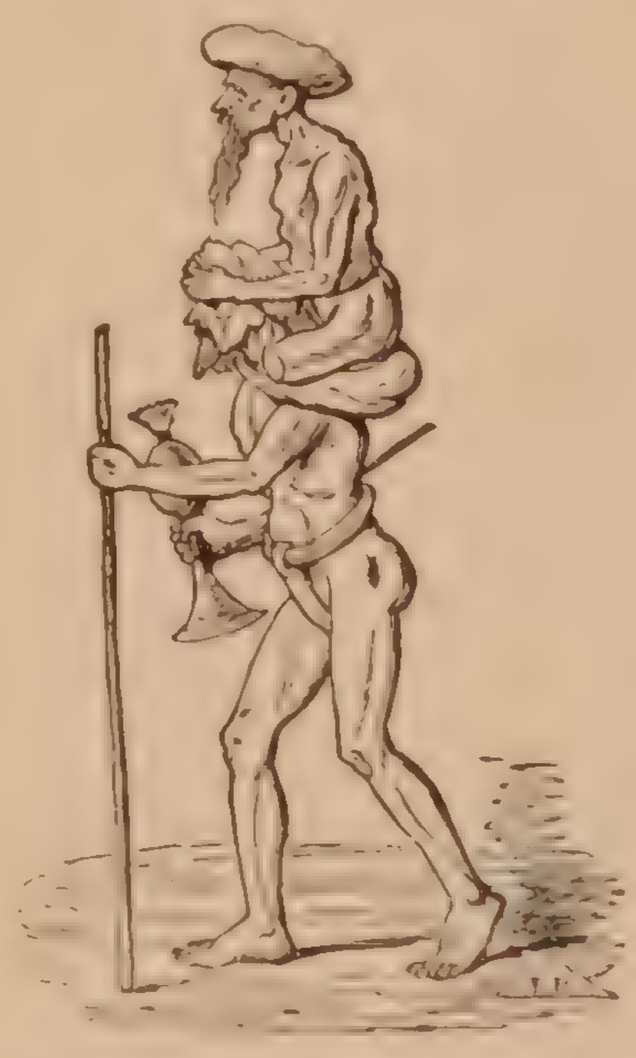
"Yes, truly," said Ghopal, "and what is more, it is advancing toward us. You are right, O Byram. The tom-toms are not being beaten for a wedding, but to drive off the hosts of locusts that are come up over the land. Here they come; we are among the advanced guard of the destroyers already."

As he spoke the locusts came flying against our travelers. They alighted on the fields on either side, they filled the air as high as the eye could reach, obscuring the daylight, while from far and near came the clanging of the tom-toms, the shouting of many voices raised in the vain hope of preventing the locusts from alighting. Vain hope indeed, for they were already weary with their flight, and apparently incapable of going further. Those that fell, soon covered every blade of the young crops; the fields were alive with them, but the clouds appeared no thinner. Far as the eye could reach the air was filled with their swarms, while crows and hawks and minas and smaller birds flitted among them, gorging themselves.

"Say, Byram," said Ghopal, exultingly, "these people do not appear very thankful to Brahma for sending the locusts; but I suppose they are blessings more or less disguised?"

"A flight of locusts," said Byram, "is rarely welcomed by man, but their visitation is not an unmixed evil."

"So much I am willing to concede at the outset," said Ghopal. "Creatures that cover the ground so densely and clear the herbage so effectually, must pay tithes with their droppings; but the question between us, now that the seed is sown and the crops well above ground, is, "Does it benefit man to have them consume them, as they are doing?"



"The Indus is a dangerous river," said Byram; "many a village has been carried away by it, but when we come to strike the balance of the account, we must admit that Sind and the Sindees owe everything to the Indus; but Mora has arrived,* and we must defer our dispute for the present."

Scarcely had they entered the town before they were recognized by a party of shopkeepers and farmers who, to the number of about fifty, were discussing the visitation.

"Oh, Byram," said one of the shopkeepers, "you have brought trouble with you this time!"

"How so?" said Byram. "Brahma sent

*The Sindees, on reaching a town, always speak of the town as having arrived.

his locusts from the north—a strong army—for which be thankful; us he sent from the south with good counsel."

"Oh, Byram the Wise," said a woman, advancing, "men say that thou art charitable and never turned a deaf ear to the needy. Look at me, a widow, whose field was sown only ten days ago, and now all will be destroyed by morning, and where shall I get seed to renew it?"

"Tell me, good woman," said Ghopal, before Byram could reply, "do you think you could manage with one pie?"*

"Why do you mock me?" replied the woman. "Will a pie buy half a bushel of grain, or is not the price already seventy-five cents a bushel, in consequence of the locusts, as men say?"

"I am not mocking thee," said Ghopal, "but a Faquir's rags do not often conceal as much money as would supply the needy with a pie a head, in a visitation of locusts. Count the people whose fields are destroyed and tell us how many there are."

"Go to your homes now," said Byram, "and to-morrow I will rest here and take counsel of the bankers and shopkeepers in this matter, but be of good cheer. There remain just twelve days for millet sowing, and all the cotton that has spread its second pair of leaves will sprout afresh after the locusts have left."

The people were by no means disposed to a hopeful view of the situation, but the shopkeepers, good people who thrive on their neighbors' necessities, were congratulating themselves that they would now get double rates for the surplus grain of the year, and extolled Byram's wisdom loudly. Very soon, too, the usual supplies began pouring in, an old woman came to prepare Byram's food, and our travelers were left to repose after their journey.

The next morning the shopkeepers spread the news around that Byram the Wise would halt in Mora for that day and give good counsel in respect of the visitation of locusts, and that they, the shopkeepers, would take heed to it, and that the people should do so also.

Accordingly, about an hour after sunrise, the farmers having finished their morning meal, began to flock into the town, and Byram inquired of them what the locusts had done during the night.

"Come out and see," said the people; "you have a stout fellow to carry you."

So Byram sprang on Ghopal's shoulders, and they went out and strolled through some fields on which the locusts had been feeding all night. The ground was literally strewn with them, and every green blade skeletoned and freighted to the ground.

"They will leave nothing," said the farmers; "by to-morrow every blade, every green thing will have disappeared."

"And in its place," said Byram, "will remain a heavy dressing of manure that will double your crops. The locusts are passing southward; to-morrow you may plow in their droppings and sow fresh seed."

"And to-day," said Ghopal, "if you are wise, you will get out your oxen and rollers without a moment's delay, and the locusts that you will crush into the earth will enrich the ground still more than the droppings. Make the best of a bad bargain, and take all you can out of the locusts."

"Nay, not so," said Byram. "Brahma will dispose of the locusts when they shall have completed the task he has assigned them, but it is not for man to take the life of any living thing thoughtlessly."

"But how are we to get fresh seed?" said the people. "Some Bunyas from Nowshera have already arrived, and they talk of fixing the price of jowari at three rupees (one dollar and fifty cents) a bushel."

"How can the farmers pay three rupees a bushel for seed grain?" said another. "When the harvest comes the Bunyas will buy the crop at forty cents and take four

* The third of a cent.

bushels for one, besides the interest, which will raise it to five bushels."

"It is folly to cast the blame of high prices upon the Bunyas," said one of their number who was present. "When grain is scarce and everybody wants it, the price must be high, whether the Bunyas will or not."

"I will discuss this question of prices with the Bunyas on my return to the Serai," said Byram, "and do you prepare to resow your fields without delay. To-morrow is an auspicious day, and with the blessing of Brahma, you shall have abundant crops this year, and your land be renewed. A flight of locusts when the land is covered with a heavy green crop will benefit the land as much as a five-year fallow."

"That may be true enough," said an old farmer. "I remember when the locusts came five years ago, just a week later than to-day, the fields were resown the very last day or two of the season, and the crops were moderate, but the next year we had the finest harvest that had been known for years, and the crops have been pretty good since—better at least than they were before the locusts, when a third part of the fields laid fallow because the soil was exhausted. Yes, the locusts may be lucky for the crops, but the Bunyas are in league with Brahma, and charge interest on his blessings at the same rate as on their own loans."

"Not so," said a Bunya, "we depend for our success on good seasons just as much as the farmers, and share their good and bad fortune with them."

"Quite true," said the previous speaker. "Brahma sends good and ill fortune to be shared among the Bunyas and cultivators, and the Bunyas take as much good fortune as fairly counterbalances the ill fortune which they manage to allot to the farmers as their share."

At this there was a laugh, and Byram, reflecting that when a people can joke over their misfortunes they are in the best mood for remedying them, proposed a return to the Serai, and a consultation with the shop keepers to fix the price of seed grain.

The whole body of merchants, to the number of several hundred, responded promptly to the summons, as did also the cultivators and people of all castes, for all were interested in the matter.

When they were all assembled they asked Byram to open the meeting, which he did in a few words:

"Every one knows," he said, "that after land has been cropped some years the crops get poorer and poorer from year to year, until the farmer is compelled to manure or fallow it. In this country farmers have no manure, it is all burned for fuel, but at intervals Brahma sends a flock of locusts, which dress the fields and render them fruitful for a few years. The locusts take whatever green stuff is on the land and convert it into manure, at a profit to the farmer. They pay good interest on what they take. But the farmer gets neither principal nor interest until the next crop, and for this he is dependent on an advance of seed from the Bunyas. Now if the Bunyas charge as much interest as the locusts pay, the farmer will gain nothing by the visitation, but if the Bunyas are moderate, both they and the farmers will be enriched. What say you, Gunnoo Lall?" asked he, turning to a portly old banker; "have the merchants agreed on the price of grain?"

"There is news that the locusts have devastated the whole country southward of Mooltan, and there is some talk of fixing the nerrick of jowari millet as high as eighty cents a maund."

At this there was a great outcry among the people, some of whom said they would rather leave their land untilled than pay such a monstrous price.

"That is too high a figure," said Byram. "The rate yesterday was thirty-six cents, and if stocks are heavy it would be wiser not to increase the price, which but for the locusts would have fallen before harvest

time to twenty or twenty-four cents. It will be something for the Bunyas to get full prices for all the grain on hand, and with the blessing of Brahma, the farmers will be able to pay it and live."

"But the stocks are not heavy," said one Bunya, who was immediately supported by a score of others; and then began a general clamor, everybody talking at once, in loud, disputatious tones. Byram took no part in it, and the discussion was continued until sunset, Bunyas and farmers breaking up into little knots, discussing and arguing among themselves and with each other. At sunset they had arrived at a dead-lock, the farmers asserting that more than forty-eight they would not give, the Bunyas that less than sixty-four they would not take.

"Better refer the matter to the arbitration of five," said Gunnoo Lall."

"Agreed," said the Bunyas.

The leading farmers discussed the proposition a few minutes and then said:

"We, too, are agreed. Let there be two bankers, two farmers, and let Byram the Wise give the casting vote."

The proposal satisfied all parties, the arbitrators were selected, and after an hour's talk which did not in any way affect the issue, Byram announced that forty-eight cents a maund had been fixed for seed grain for the next three days.

Bunyas and farmers were alike pleased that the matter had been so satisfactorily settled. The Bunyas said that Byram had been influenced more by consideration for the poor than by strict justice, but this, of course, was intended for the ears of the farmers, to make them think they had got the best of the bargain.

AN EARNEST APPEAL TO "YOUNG AMERICA."

BOYS, spare the birds. What I am going to say will not be addressed to the ingrain bad boy; for him there is little hope for reform. The boy who feels pleasure in killing a poor innocent bird, or in robbing it of its eggs, or its young, is not far removed from the Pomeroy boy, who took pleasure in enticing little children into cellars, and other out of the way places, and then killing them. To such boys I have not a word to say; they are past redemption, and unless they repent and reform, the devil, in his own good time, will surely get them.

But there is another class of boys, who are naturally kind and tender-hearted. To such boys I would say, become missionaries to other boys, who practice unkindness through thoughtlessness and the bad example of innately bad boys. Persuade these kindly disposed boys to come and go with you, and be disciples of the Audubon Society, teach them to preach a crusade against cruelty to animals in general, and birds in particular.

To thinking, kind-hearted men it is unnecessary to say anything. I judge others by myself. When I was a thoughtless boy, led on by the example of other thoughtless and bad boys, I used to throw stones at birds; aye, and rob their nests, too, and now that I am an old man, I feel exceedingly sorry that I did it.

I well recollect that, once of a time, I shot a robin. He flew some distance, and fell in the tall grass. I went and picked him up and found that I had inflicted a fatal wound in his breast. The poor wounded bird looked up into my face so imploringly, that it caused me to shed tears, and now, to-day, at the age of eighty-five years, I am haunted by the pitiful imploring look of that poor, innocent, dying bird, and feelings of deep remorse come over me when-

ever I see a robin. I would be willing to make great sacrifices to be made guiltless of the wanton murder of that poor innocent bird.

Now boys, as it was and is with me, so it will be with you by and by. If you slaughter the poor birds through thoughtlessness now, when you shall come to realize the great sin of wantonly taking the life of a poor innocent bird, you will never to the day of your death cease to regret it.

Now just here I desire to make a special plea in behalf of the so-called catbird. Boys are taught to "hate catbirds." To hate and persecute catbirds seems to be an article in their creed. This strong unreasonable prejudice seems to be a bad feeling inherited from their fathers. I have observed it through the four generations of boys and men that I have known.

Now why is this so? To be sure, the catbird will steal your cherries; but then he is no more to blame in that regard than the robin, and many other kinds of birds that are useful to man. He is entitled to his share of the fruit, as but for him and other kinds of birds, the worms would have destroyed the very trees that the cherries grow upon.

And then you have heard him mew like a cat, hence his vulgar name, and the almost universal boy prejudice against this very interesting bird.

If you are an observant boy, as you should be in regard to all things, you will have noticed that this bird never makes the catlike cry except when provoked to do it by some one disturbing him, or his and his mate's nest. It is his mode of swearing at his enemies.

I once had the same prejudice in common with other boys; but, since I have become better acquainted with him, I have come to love him above all other birds. His far-famed Southern cousin, the mockingbird, in melody can't play second fiddle to him.

Perhaps you have never noticed his song; if not, you have missed a rare treat, and if you desire to hear the sweetest song made by any known American bird, you just wait till next spring; find where a pair of these birds have their nest; visit the place in the early morning; you will find the male bird perched on the highest tip of the tallest tree in the neighborhood of the nest, where his wife is breeding the coming young family, and you will be ravished by such a marvellously thrilling melody of bird song as you never dreamed or had any conception of before. The song is not so varied as that of the mockingbird, but O! how much sweeter. Now, if you prefer form to feathers, you will admire his graceful shape as much as his unrivalled song.

Some naturalists have followed the vulgar idea and have named this bird *Turdus felivox*. Others have named it *Orpheus carolinensis*. There are still other names, but the last named is the most befitting, and should be adopted to the exclusion of all other names. The Grecian Orpheus never sang more true to nature than does our *Orpheus*.

But, call him by what name you will, don't shoot him, don't stone him, don't rob his nest, spare him and protect him; for independent of his unsurpassed vocal powers, with which he ravishes your ears, he richly earns his living in orchard and in garden, and does little or no harm to any one.

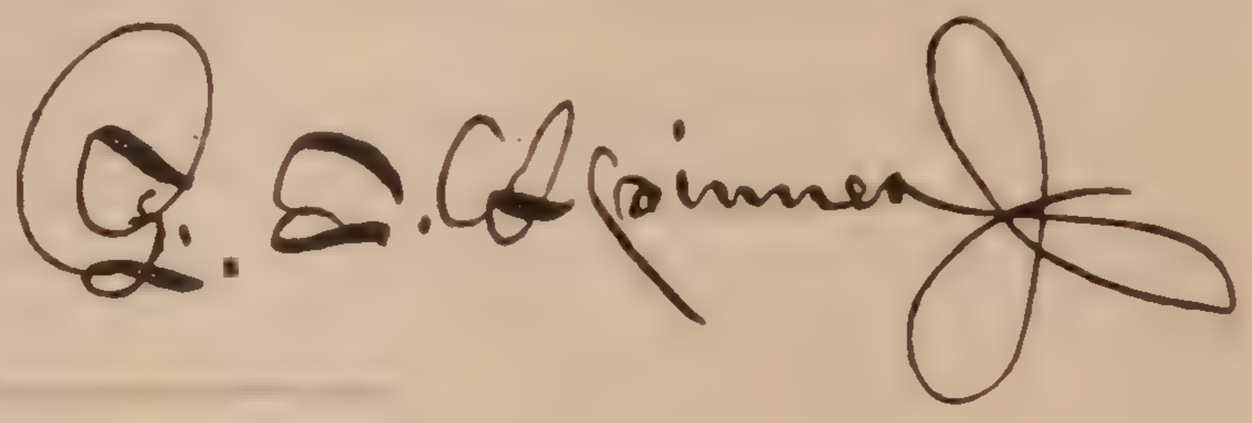
Again I say, boys, spare the birds, and above all other birds protect the wrongfully despised and hated catbird. Do him justice; don't call him by a low, vulgar nickname; he deserves the name of Orpheus, the sweetest singer of ancient Greece.

To all boys, and to men as well, good or bad, I would say, if your tastes tend in that direction, shoot any game birds in proper season, but at no other time, and then as many as you may need for the table of yourselves or your friends; but not one bird more than you so need.

As to the English sparrow, kill him, wherever you find him, in season and out of season. He is a tramp, and a marauder of the worst kind. He has never been known to do any good, and is of no use, except to be served up on toast. He wages a constant warfare upon better birds, and destroys the grain and fruit of the farmer and the gardener. Therefore, I say, give him no quarter, but go for him as you would for any other thief and robber. Here, now, is a chance for the bad boy to exercise his bad propensities, and at the same time accomplish a great good. Let him go for the English sparrow.

Now, boys, you just follow my advice, and you will be respected by all good men, and will deserve to be happy now and hereafter.

I am, the friend of the boys and the birds,



IN CAMP AT PABLO BEACH, Florida, Sept. 26, 1887.

ALL NIGHT ON A MOUNTAIN.

YOU may talk as you please about camping out and all that sort of thing, but I shall never forget the first night I spent out of doors. It was one summer several years ago, and we were staying up in the mountains. In the same house with us were two other boys, Charley Huston and Will Campbell, and it wasn't long before we were pretty good friends, and together we explored the whole neighborhood.

Well, one day we started on a long walk. We went down our mountain (the one the hotel is on) to the river; here there is a little ferryboat that crosses the river four times a day, once over and back in the morning, and again in the afternoon. We got in and went across, and proceeded to climb the mountain opposite ours.

Neither Will nor I had ever been there before, so everything was strange and new to us. But Charley knew all about it, as he had spent the previous summer in the same place, and had often walked over with his father. So of course he was guide; but as far as that goes, he always *was* guide, for he was a little older, a good deal quieter, and a great deal wiser than either Will or I. He had a funny, quiet way about him that seemed to say, "I'm going to boss this thing," and no matter how much a fellow might rebel against it, he was just as firm as a rock. Will and I had gotten used to it by this time, and didn't mind it, so that this day, when he said, "We'll take this path," we did not say anything, but simply followed.

About midday we came upon a certain stream, where he said we were to eat our dinner. I wonder why it is that sandwiches, or even dry bread, no matter how stale, will taste so good in the woods, while at home we would turn up our noses at such poor fare. I do not remember ever having eaten any dinner with a better appetite than I did that day, although our bread had fallen into a small mountain creek we had crossed, and was still soggy and very heavy.

After dinner we started to come home again, but by a different route from the one we had previously taken; indeed, as well as I remember, we went around the mountain instead of over it. It was longer but much pleasanter, as there was not so much uphill work about it.

It was about four o'clock when Charley,

who was ahead, called our attention to a bird's nest overhead.

"What kind is it, Charley?" I asked, for, having lived in the city all my life, I did not know one bird's nest from another.

"It's a wood thrush's," he answered, "one of the finest singers we have."

"Oh, my!" I said, "do you suppose there are any eggs?"

"Not now, it's too late, but I guess there are young birds; yes, there must be, for here comes the mother with something in her mouth."

We watched the pretty brown creature as she fed her little ones, with a great deal of interest, until Charley said:

"Come, fellows, or we'll miss the boat; it's getting late."

"No, sir," I said, "I'm going to have a look at these birds first. Come on, Will, give us a boost, will you?" and I began to shin up the tree.

"Well, look at them, then, but hurry up," said Charley, and I'll wait down here for you."

So Will and I climbed up into the branches and gazed with awe into our first bird's nest.

"Why, ain't they ugly!" said Will, and he was right, too, for it almost frightened me when I looked down their great gaping mouths.

"I say, Will," said I, "I wonder how it would do for us each to take one and raise it in a cage?"

"Let's," said Will, "for you know Charley said they made splendid singers."

No sooner said than done, we immediately transferred two miserable babies from the nest into a pocket-handkerchief. Then we told Charley what we were about, but instead of being pleased he was very angry.

"You wouldn't do such a thing, would you? Let the poor little things alone."

But we insisted, and debated as to whether we should take a third, in case one should die.

"How can you be so cruel, Ned?" he called from below. "I didn't think it was in you. Put those birds into the nest this minute and come down here."

"I won't!" I shouted back. "I'm going to take one home to my sister, her canary died last winter."

He got very angry, and, after scolding a good deal, went off and left us, saying he wasn't going to miss the boat if we were.

We had no fear of missing the boat, but by the time we slid down the tree with our treasures, Charley was nowhere in sight.

The path, if it could be called a path, was longer and rougher than we supposed, and we had to walk slowly, so as not to

joggle our birds, so by the time we got to the river, the boat had gone.

Here was a pretty mess, sure enough, there was no other boat we could take, and no one lived on the mountain, so we just had to sit down and think about it. Finally I said that the only thing we could do, would be to walk up the river about five miles where there was a village, there we could get a boat, cross the river and take the train back to the hotel.

This was not a very pleasant prospect, you may be sure, especially after all the walking we had already done that day; but there was nothing else to be done, so we started out, lugging our poor little prisoners with us.

We had hardly gone two miles, when Will sank down and said:

"Oh, Ned; I can't walk another step, I've a blister on my foot as big as a hen's egg."

I proposed going on alone, and getting a boat, and then I would pick him up on the way back, but he wouldn't let me. So we had to sit down and rest, and then I thought, "Perhaps I can persuade him to go a little further." But that did not work, for long before he began to be in the least rested, it had grown so dark we could scarcely see.

Poor Will, I don't wonder he was tired, he was a whole year younger than I was and not half as strong, and a walk like that is enough to tire out any eleven-year-old boy.

We did not much fancy the idea of staying out all night, and what made it more disagreeable was the howling of a wildcat not far off.

We tried to look on the bright side of things, but it was hard work; we would keep thinking of home and what they were doing there. Mrs. Campbell, who was an invalid, was probably sitting in the corner of the porch that was most sheltered, and mamma pacing the terrace with Effie, wondering what made me so late.

And so the sun set, and the twilight deepened, and night came on; and with it the queer summer night noises, which one don't mind at home, safe in bed, but objects to most decidedly out in the woods alone, particularly if a wildcat leads the concert.

They made such a din, that, tired as I was, I could not for a long time get a wink of sleep. I rather envied Will, who slept as peacefully through it all as if he was at home in his own bed.

After a long time I got used to the noise and dropped off. I do not think I dreamed anything, but I woke up about half an hour before dawn with the idea that mamma was calling me, so I sat up with a start, and oh, how dark and lonely the woods were. The concert had stopped and all was as still as death. The silence, I think, was worse than the noise.

I turned to Will, who had not changed his position, and felt almost inclined to wake him to keep me company. I am glad now that I did not do such a selfish thing. At last the sense of utter loneliness got the better of me, and I leaned my head on my arms and cried, yes, cried hard, although I was twelve years old, and big for my age. I never felt so badly in all my life. So I cried for mother and I cried for home, and I felt better for it.

When I was pretty nearly through, I heard a faint little noise. I stopped and listened, and then I heard a faint little peep, such a lonely, forsaken, homesick little peep, that it went straight to my heart and cut like a knife.

Of course I knew what it was, and it sent me right down into the blues again, just as I was getting better, when I remembered how the mother bird had cried that afternoon when we robbed the nest. And then I thought of how those poor little birds must have felt, out away from home all night, as long as I felt so badly myself, and how much more helpless they were than we, till I wondered at, and despised myself for being so heartless and cruel. And then came the thought of my mother, and of what she would say if I told her. I fancied I saw her face grow grave as she said:

"Oh! Ned, Ned; I did not think my son would do so mean and so cruel a thing."

It made me feel awfully bad, and I made up my mind that just as soon as it was light enough I would put them back in the nest if I had to walk ten miles to do it. As soon as it was light enough to see, I went to look at my prisoners, and oh! what a sight met me. One of them was dead and the other was crying piteously. What if one of us had died that night on the moun-

tain side. Think of poor mamma or Mrs. Campbell if Will or I had been brought home dead.

With a great lump rising in my throat I tried to dig some worms for the remaining bird. I found a few, but he refused to eat them. So with a heavy heart I picked up the handkerchief and started out to look for the nest, leaving Will still sleeping. I found it, hardly a mile away, so I climbed up and dropped the live birdie into the nest, and the dead one I wrapped up in the handkerchief again, and buried it tenderly at the foot of the tree. Then I turned to come away with a lighter heart.

Just as I did so the sun came up over the hills, and there burst from the forest the most beautiful music I had ever heard. At first it was low and sad, as though the birds were singing a requiem over the grave of the little thrush, then more voices joined it, until it became a glorious chant, which followed me all the way back to where Will was sleeping.

As soon as he woke we started for the river, for we did not intend to miss the boat this time. It was a slow, painful journey, for we were both so stiff and sore we could hardly walk. But we got there in time, and my! weren't we glad to step on to the other shore.

We found out afterward that Charley had come over in the boat the evening before and had sent a search party over to the mountain to look for us, but as we had started to walk up the river, we did not hear them hallooing for us.

And so ends the story of my first and last robbery of a bird's nest.

E. B. Barry.

THE RICE BIRD.

A CENTURY or more ago, the people of the Southern States took up arms against the rice bird; genuine fire-arms, too, charged with gunpowder, of which they have exploded so enormous a quantity, that the very atmosphere ought to be reeking with the smoke of "villainous saltpetre" and tremulous with the reverberations of incessant fusilades.

At seed time, when the birds are winging their way northward, and again a few weeks before harvest, when the young birds are making their first flight to the southern paradise, the air is rent with the din of fire-arms from gray dawn till eventide; hundreds of thousands of birds, if not millions, are shot annually, and it may be some sort of satisfaction to the planter to inflict ruthless justice on the predatory foe, but in so far as concerns the economic results of the crusade, it is beyond all dispute that the rice birds thrive on powder and shot, and were never more numerous than at present. There is nothing anomalous in this; the rice bird is one of our native birds, capable of holding his own in the struggle for existence, he is consequently constantly trenching on the limits of his food supply both North and South, and all the shooting of the planters has no other effect than to save them from the wholesale destruction that must inevitably result from exceeding those limits. The most energetic shooting has no other effect than to maintain some approach to uniformity in numbers, and if the planter would take into consideration the amount of damage sustained by trampling down the rice in the pursuit of the foe, he would find it more profitable to submit to their depredations, relying on the facts that rice culture will spread, but the rice birds can never increase beyond the limits of their food supply in that season in which it is scarcest.

THE AUDUBON NOTE BOOK.

MEMBERSHIP RETURNS.

THE registered membership of the Society on Sept. 30 was 39,750, showing an increase of 767 during the month from the following sources:

New York	231	California	17
Connecticut	19	Kansas	26
Massachusetts	83	Minnesota	1
Pennsylvania	29	Illinois	45
New Hampshire	38	Alabama	2
New Jersey	28	Washington Territory	2
Rhode Island	2	District of Columbia	1
Maine	14	North Carolina	1
Vermont	5	South Carolina	6
Ohio	72	Maryland	14
Kentucky	3	Virginia	28
Wisconsin	1	Georgia	30
Colorado	4	Canada	37
Iowa	15	England	5
Michigan	7	Turkey	1
			767

C, F. AMERY, General Secretary.

MIGRATORY NOTES.

WITH the season of southward migration the young birds' troubles begin. From far beyond the reach of human vision the migrating birds sight the glimmering lighthouses and bear down upon them in fatal unconsciousness of the danger, only to dash their little lives out on the irons which guard the lenses from injury.

Fifteen hundred small birds were found dead at the foot of the Statue of Liberty one morning, and from further south accounts reach us of unpremeditated self-immolations on a similar scale.

The instinct which prompts migratory birds to fly toward lighthouses has doubtless been given them for a useful purpose. Some have supposed that they are guided on their course by certain stars toward which they are lured by a passionate impulse, until they sink exhausted by the way, to find themselves in a land of sunshine and plenty. If this is the case; if night after night is spent in the weary, hopeless longing to merge themselves in the bright distant sphere that comes no nearer, one may imagine the wild delirium of exultant delight with which they approach the lighthouse beacon, every pulse vibrating with desire to merge themselves in its warm, delicious, brilliant glow. Every nerve is strained to the utmost, the glowing light comes nearer—they are there—there is a heavy thud, consciousness is suspended, their little lives are battered out upon the impaling iron, and one after another they fall to the ground dead. Happily the speed with which they dash themselves against the protecting irons generally results in instantaneous death.

Men and nations, too, have an instinctive craving for light, and have been equally lured to their destruction by the glamor of false lights.

CRANKS.

THE genus "crank" is divided into many species and sub-species, but one of the most common and most obnoxious types is that of the poor, deluded wretch who persists in venting his malice for some imagined slight.

The Audubon Society has for more than eighteen months been pestered by such a crank, who writes paragraphs for country papers warning people not to sign the Society's pledges as the agents or local secretaries are swindlers (or conjurers?) who convert the pledges into promissory notes.

Perhaps the writer is a bird skinner, perhaps he has offered his services as a local secretary and been rejected, we know not. All we know is that the paragraphs bear internal evidence of malice.

The swindle is said to be perpetrated "under the guise of a so-called society for the protection of birds."

Unfortunately for the writer, if his aims really are malicious, local secretaries are local and well-known residents of the localities in which they act, and rarely solicit the signatures of other than personal acquaintances. The Society has no agents going about the country in quest of members. There is no need. The Society numbered five thousand members when these paragraphs first appeared; now it numbers forty thousand. Who shall say how much we are indebted to our crank friend for publishing us in out of the way places?

"MANUAL OF NORTH AMERICAN BIRDS."

WE have received a copy of the "Manual of North American Birds," by Robert Ridgway. It is a grand work of 600 pages, octavo, supplemented by an index and 123 plates containing nearly 500 outline drawings of generic characters admirably executed.

For the naturalist it is sufficient to say that the work is ready; for the sportsman and dilettanti naturalist it may be added that this work, projected and commenced by Professor Spencer F. Baird, and carried out by Mr. Robert Ridgway, is a standard work of reference representing the highest type of systematic ornithology, a work which in the language of its preface is intended as a "convenient and satisfactory means of identifying any American bird in all its variations of plumage." Professor Baird has left us, but he lived to see the completion

of the work in the preparation of which he retained to the last a lively interest, which neither harassing cares nor physical suffering could damp. The whole plan and treatment of the work bears the impress of his own character, simple, exact, orderly, scientific, but these characteristics could not have been impressed upon it, excepting by one who shared them in common with him. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co. Price $7.50.

THE EDITOR'S TALK.

THE signature of General Spinner, whose pleasant lecture to boys is published on another page, will recall to some of our readers the pleasure it has afforded them in time past to become possessed of documents bearing his signature in the days when he was at the head of the Treasury. This is the General Spinner who, during his long service in that Department, earned for himself the appellation of "Watch Dog of the Treasury," an expression which in few words conveys a higher tribute to the stern, unflinching fidelity with which he guarded the nation's trust, than could be spread over a volume of studied encomium. The General's official services belong to history. He is now a young man of 86, young because he is still overflowing with mirth and sympathy—sympathy with young people and with birds also, and with all nature, animate and inanimate, and of course he is a warm supporter of the Audubon Society. He is no friend of the English sparrow, because he accepts the popular view that these impudent little foreigners, without beauty or song, are destroying or driving away the native birds, whose presence gladdens both eye and ear. Whether the General is right or wrong is not of much consequence. The sparrows are rapidly reaching the limits of their food supply, and this reached, two-thirds of their numbers must die every year; a necessity which renders their culinary treatment an important branch of economic ornithology. The General's recommendations, if carried into effect, so far from exterminating the sparrow, will simply afford a test of his merits, which will be sure to result in his protection during the breeding season.

A NEW SOUTH WALES paper is credited with a story now going the round of the American press to the effect that an American woman, Mrs. Mackay, having determined to possess a mantle made of the breasts of the bird of Paradise, has arranged to send a couple of "sportsmen" to New Guinea to obtain the needed supply, estimated at five hundred skins. Of course all ladies who wear feather millinery must directly or indirectly employ skin hunters to shoot the birds, and one who buys a single skin for her hat breathes as open a defiance of the better sentiment of the age as she who wears five hundred; the question of wholesale or retail indulgence is dependent on length of purse. Nevertheless we hope that for the credit of American women the story is not true. A woman who could seek to draw attention to herself by such an exhibition on her person of the evidences of wealth, must be necessarily unconscious of the impression she would create among people of good taste abroad; but it is hard for the average American woman to read such statements without feeling mortified at the reflection that foreigners accept such stories in good faith, and base their estimate of American women on incidents which, if true, are equally as characteristic of the *nouveau richesse* in monarchical as in republican societies.

CORRESPONDENTS occasionally omit to give their address, or they send in packets of signed pledges without any communication, and very likely charge the Society with neglect for failing to reply, or to send certificates. A Brooklyn (N. Y.) correspondent sent in some 25 pledges early in October, but as they were unaccompanied by any communication and had no street addresses on them, we do not know where to sent certificates.

PROPOSED improvements in Trinity Cemetery will necessitate the removal of Audubon's remains from their present resting place. There is to be a new avenue laid out to be called Audubon avenue, at the head of which it is proposed to erect a monument worthy of the great naturalist; but it is understood that the New York Academy of Sciences favor the transfer of the remains to Trinity Church.

MR. H. S. MARLOR, of Brooklyn, Conn., has bought sixty acres of woodland, which he appropriates as a harbor of refuge for birds.

WHAT I FOUND IN THE BIRD'S NEST.—One morning as I and my dog were strolling in the woods to see the birds, I happened to spy a bird's nest in a pine tree. I hastily climbed up to the nest to take a look at it, and just as I was going to put my hand in it I heard a squeaking noise, and out jumped two woodmice and four or five young ones. My dog Joe then jumped upon the little ones and killed three of them. One of the old ones ran up a birch tree, and as I went to grab her she bit my finger, and I threw her upon the ground; she then ran into a hole in a stump. I then went home very much pleased with my adventure. I remain your loving friend, HARRY W. YOUNG (South Hingham, Mass.).

THE AUDUBON SOCIETY FOR THE PROTECTION OF BIRDS.

THE AUDUBON SOCIETY was founded in New York city in February, 1886. Its purpose is the protection of American birds, not used for food, from destruction for mercantile purposes. The magnitude of the evil with which the Society will cope, and the imperative need of the work which it proposes to accomplish, are outlined in the following statement concerning

THE DESTRUCTION OF BIRDS.

Within the last few years, the destruction of our birds has increased at a rate which is alarming. This destruction now takes place on such a large scale as to seriously threaten the existence of a number of our most useful species. It is carried on chiefly by men and boys who sell the skins or plumage to be used for ornamental purposes—principally for the trimming of women's hats, bonnets and clothing. These men kill everything that wears feathers. The birds of the woods, the birds of the field, the birds of the marsh and those of the sea are alike slain, at all times and at all seasons. It matters not if the bird be a useful one which devours the hurtful insects which destroy the farmer's crops, or a bright-plumaged songster whose advent has been welcomed in spring, and which has reared its brood in the door yard during the summer, or a swift-winged sea swallow whose flight along the shore has often with unerring certainty led the fisherman to his finny prey—whatever it be, it must be sacrificed to the bird butcher's lust for slaughter and for gain. Besides the actual destruction of the birds, their numbers are still further diminished by the practice of robbing their nests in the breeding season.

Although it is impossible to get at the number of birds killed each year, some figures have been published which give an idea of what the slaughter must be. We know that a single local taxidermist handles 30,000 bird skins in one year; that a single collector brought back from a three months trip 11,000 skins; that from one small district on Long Island about 70,000 birds were brought to New York in four months time. In New York one firm had on hand February 1, 1886, 200,000 skins. The supply is not limited by domestic consumption. American bird skins are sent abroad. The great European markets draw their supplies from all over the world. In London there were sold in three months from one auction room, 404,464 West Indian and Brazilian bird skins, and 356,389 East Indian birds. In Paris 100,000 African birds have been sold by one dealer in one year. One New York firm recently had a contract to supply 40,000 skins of American birds to one Paris firm. These figures tell their own story—but it is a story which might be known even without them; we may read it plainly enough in the silent hedges, once vocal with the morning songs of birds, and in the deserted fields where once bright plumage flashed in the sunlight.

BIRDS, INSECTS AND CROPS.

The food of our small birds consists very largely of the insects which feed on the plants grown by the farmer. These insects multiply with such astounding rapidity that a single pair may in the course of one season be the progenitors of six billions of their kind. All through the season at which this insect life is most active, the birds are constantly at work destroying for their young and for themselves, tens of thousands of hurtful creatures, which, but for them, would swarm upon the farmer's crops and lessen the results of his labors.

A painstaking and ardent naturalist not very long ago watched the nest of a pair of martins for sixteen hours, from 4 A. M. till 8 P. M., just to see how many visits the parent birds made to their young. He found that in that time 312 visits to the four young were made, 119 by the male and 193 by the female. If we suppose only six insects to have been brought at each visit, this pair of birds would have destroyed, for their young alone, in this one summer's day, not far from 2,000 insects. The important relations which our birds bear to the agricultural interests and so to the general welfare, are recognized by the governments of all our States. Laws exist for their protection, but these laws are rendered inoperative by the lack of an intelligent public sentiment to support them. They are nowhere enforced. It is for the interest of every one that such a public sentiment should be created.

It is time that this destruction were stopped.

PURPOSE OF THE AUDUBON SOCIETY.

To secure the protection of our birds by awakening a better sentiment, the Audubon Society, named after the greatest of American ornithologists, has been founded. The objects sought to be accomplished by this Society are to prevent as far as possible—

(1) The killing of any wild bird not used for food.

(2) The taking or destroying of the eggs or nests of any wild birds.

(3) The wearing of the feathers of wild birds. Ostrich feathers, whether from wild or tame birds, and those of domestic fowls, are specially exempted.

The Audubon Society aims especially to preserve those birds which are now practically without protection. Our game birds are already protected by law, and in large measure by public sentiment, and their care may be left to the sportsman. The great aim of the Society is the protection of American non-game birds. The English sparrow is not included in our lists.

PLAN OF THE WORK.

Obviously the Society cannot supply any machinery of compulsion to lead individuals and communities to a higher regard for bird life and to efforts for its protection. Nor are compulsory measures thought necessary. The wrong is tolerated now only because of thoughtlessness and indifference. The birds are killed for millinery purposes. So long as fashion demands bird feathers, the birds will be slaughtered. The remedy is to be found in the awakening of a healthy public sentiment on the subject. If this enormous destruction of birds can once be put in its true light before the eyes of men and women and young folks, if interest be aroused and sentiment created, the great wrong must cease. To so present the case to the people as to awaken this corrective sentiment is the special work contemplated by the Audubon Society. The methods adopted are very simple. Pledges are furnished, subscription to which constitutes membership, and certificates are issued to members.

TERMS OF MEMBERSHIP.

The signing of any of the pledges will qualify one for membership in the Society. It is earnestly desired that each member may sign all three of the pledges. Beyond the promise contained in the pledge no obligation nor responsibility is incurred. There are no fees, nor dues, nor any expenses of any kind. There are no conditions as to age. The boys and girls are invited to take part in the work, for they can often do more than others to practically protect the nesting birds. All who are interested in the subject are invited to become members, and to urge their friends to join the Society. If each man, woman or child who reads this circular will exert his or her influence, it will not take long to enlist in the good work a great number of people actively concerned in the protection of our birds. It is desired that members may be enrolled in every town and village throughout the land, so that by the moral weight of its influence this Society may check the slaughter of our beautiful songsters. The beneficent influence of the Audubon Society should be exerted in every remotest by-way where the songs of birds fill the air, and in every crowded city where the plumes of slain songsters are worn as an article of dress.

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS.

As there are a very great number of people in full sympathy with the Audubon movement, and ready to lend it their moral support, but who refrain from joining the Society simply because they find it distasteful to sign a pledge, it has been determined to form a class of Associate Members. Any one expressing his or her sympathy with the objects of the Audubon Society and submitting a written request for membership to any local secretary, will be enrolled on the list of Associate Members. All such applications for membership received by local secretaries of the Society should be forwarded to the General Secretary for registration.

LOCAL SECRETARIES.

The Society has local secretaries in cities, towns and villages. The local secretary will furnish this circular of information and pledge forms; will receive the signed pledges, keep a list of the members, forward a duplicate list with the pledges for enrollment and file at the Society's office; and will receive in return certificates of membership, to be filled out and signed by the local secretary and given to the members. No certificate of membership will be issued to any person except upon the receipt of a signed pledge at the office of the Society. Where no local secretary has yet been appointed, individual applicants for membership may address the Society at its office, No. 40 Park Row, New York.

If there is no local secretary in your town, you are invited to act as such yourself, or to hand this to some other person who will accept the office. Upon application we will supply copies of this circular and pledge forms.

THE AUDUBON SOCIETY CERTIFICATE.

The Society furnishes to each member a handsome certificate of membership. This bears a portrait of the great naturalist, John James Audubon, after whom the Society very appropriately takes its name.

The office of the Society is at 40 Park Row, New York city. All communications should be addressed

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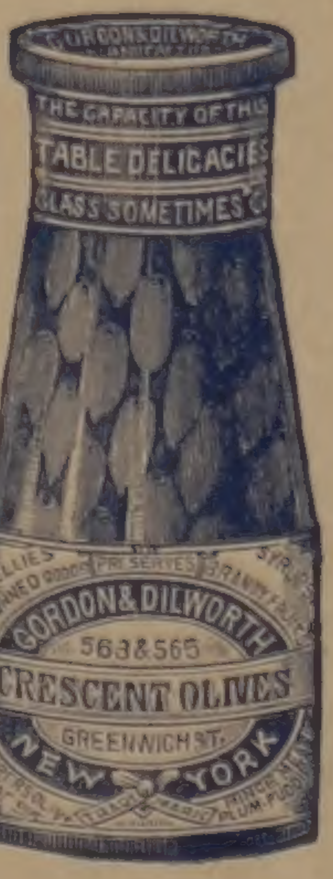

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